

A NEW PORTRAIT GETS THE ROYAL STAMP OF APPROVAL



'The Queen was very happy to include her dogs in the portrait. She obviously adores them, so I thought, "Why not?"'

All the Queen's doggies: Nicky Phillipps poses in front of her portrait of the Queen and four of her dogs. The artist says she wasn't sure how many animals to include, telling HELLO!: "I didn't want any favouritism"

ADDITIONAL PHOTOS: ROYAL MAIL/PA PHOTOS

As the Queen celebrates the anniversary of her Coronation, she is delighted that some of her best friends have been included in the special events to mark it.

Artist Nicky Phillipps decided to include four of the Queen's dogs – corgis Holly and Willow and dorgis (a crossbreed of dachshund and corgi) Candy and Vulcan – in a special portrait that will soon become a part of all of our lives.

"I had to get permission from the Queen," the 48-year-old told HELLO!. "She was very happy with the idea – she obviously adores them and they are a big part of her life, so I thought, 'Why not?'"

"I wasn't quite sure how many to put in, then I thought, 'If I start with one, she obviously isn't someone who has just one dog. And I couldn't put in two – you can't make a good composition out of two of anything. If I did three, it would mean one was left out and that's a bit unfair – I didn't want any favouritism.'"

IN THE DOG HOUSE

Nicky, who created an acclaimed portrait of Princes William and Harry in their Army dress uniform in 2009, was selected by Royal Mail to create the new image, a detail from which will be used on a stamp to mark the 60th anniversary of the Coronation.

She said the royal pets – who starred alongside the Queen and Daniel Craig in the London 2012 Opening Ceremony James Bond clip – weren't on sparkling form when she visited.

"We had quite a chaotic sitting," said Nicky, laughing. "They weren't the best behaved, though some were better than others. They didn't want to sit around like the Von Trapp family and be photographed, they wanted to go out."

It's not the first time corgis have been depicted in portraits alongside Her Majesty. Michael Leonard included one in a 1985

painting and in 1974 the Kennel Club commissioned Terence Cuneo to create an image of the monarch with her dogs.

Nicky's portrait – which will be given to the Royal Collection after its inclusion in an exhibition of her work in London – was completed after three one-hour sittings with the Queen last autumn.

She is depicted in the Chinese Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace, dressed in Order of the Garter robes.

"I was terribly keen to paint her as the head of state, with the robes and everything, and it was the most wonderful opportunity to do that," said Nicky. "I am pleased with the portrait, I really am."

The artist told HELLO! that she felt a mix of emotions when she was given the commission. "I felt extremely excited about it, but I was quite apprehensive – it's quite an undertaking," said Nicky. "But painting it was easier than I thought. It was much easier to get a nice image – I think she was beginning to smile."

"She is very like that... she has a wonderful sense of humour and a very infectious laugh – as long as the sittings had that sort of feel to them, you absorb them and it comes out in the picture."

FAIR COMMENT

Some previous royal portraits have received lukewarm reviews and Nicky said she's prepared for bad press.

"I really hope people criticise this on the basis that they have been to see the actual picture – I don't think it's fair to criticise it from a photograph. And if they still criticise me, then I will accept it."

INTERVIEW: LAURA BENJAMIN
PHOTOS: JAMES ROBINSON

To see a video of our interview with Nicky, download our iPad edition, available from Apple Newsstand or visit videos.hellomagazine.com. The portrait will be on display at Fine Art Commissions Ltd from 5 to 28 June. Visit fineartcommissions.com.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Coronation, Royal Mail has issued a series of six stamps featuring portraits of the Queen. As well as Nicky Phillipps's artwork (below, far left), the collection comprises (from second left): Terence Cuneo's 1953 Coronation portrait; Andrew Festing's 1999 artwork; the 1955 Pietro Annigoni painting; Sergei Pavlenko's 2000 portrait; and Richard Stone's 1992 creation



